



State Board of Equalization

News Release

Vice Chair Michelle Steel

3rd District – Orange County

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**For Immediate Release
February 6, 2013**

NR 15-13-S
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BOE Teams to Visit More than 12,000 California Retailers Letters to Businesses in 18 Zip Codes Are in the Mail

Sacramento - Retailers throughout the state will be receiving letters from the California State Board of Equalization (BOE) notifying them about upcoming visits from Statewide Compliance and Outreach Program (SCOP) teams. SCOP visits are intended to educate retailers about properly reporting sales and use tax, increase compliance with tax laws, and maintain outreach efforts to assure taxpayers the state's tax system is fair and equal for all Californians.

Letters are on the way to 12,342 business owners in the following zip codes: Anderson (96007), Aptos (95003), Blythe (92225), Brawley (92227), Desert Hot Springs (92240), Imperial (92251), King City (93930), La Mesa (91941), Rancho Palos Verdes (90275), Redding (96003), San Francisco (94102), Sunnyvale (94089), Templeton (93465), Valley Village (91607), Ventura (93004), Walnut Creek (94596), and Yorba Linda (92886 and 92887).

BOE Vice Chair Michelle Steel reminds retailers that they have specific legal rights as California taxpayers. These include a right to courteous and prompt service, to fair treatment, confidentiality, information and assistance, and a right to address their elected Board of Equalization member. "Taxpayers in Southern California who have questions or concerns about a SCOP visit can call my office directly at (949) 724-2578," says Ms. Steel.

Eight different SCOP teams located statewide (Oakland, Sacramento, San Jose, Van Nuys, Norwalk, Irvine, Riverside, and Ventura) conduct door-to-door, in-person visits in the zip code areas they cover. It is important for retailers to know that the BOE asks only business-related questions and does not inquire about personal financial information. Businesses found to be operating without a seller's permit are given instructions on how to register with the BOE, as well as information about other necessary licenses. Home-based businesses are not visited.

Since 2008, SCOP has visited more than 353,000 businesses statewide to verify that retailers are registered, and to ensure that noncompliant businesses do not have an unfair advantage over registered businesses that are reporting their sales and use taxes and/or fees to BOE.

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The BOE has found that nearly 98 percent of the businesses operating in California are doing so with the correct permits, and collecting the correct taxes and fees. However, the other two percent that are out of compliance are among those responsible for more than \$2 billion in uncollected taxes contributing to the state's "tax gap" - the difference between the amount of taxes owed and the amount paid, negatively impacting all state taxpayers.

If business owners have any questions about these upcoming visits, they may contact their local [BOE SCOP Team](#) or visit the [website](#).

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Elected to the Board of Equalization in 2006 and re-elected in 2010, Michelle Steel serves as *Southern California's elected taxpayer advocate*. In December 2007, Steel discovered the Board of Equalization had delayed the return of millions of dollars in security deposits owed to California businesses. Procedures were changed due to Steel's decisive leadership. Following her investigation, the tax agency refunded tax security deposits to over 5,500 small businesses. To date, over \$100 million in security deposits have been returned to taxpayers.

The five-member California State Board of Equalization (BOE) is a publicly elected tax board. The BOE collects more than \$53.7 billion annually in taxes and fees supporting state and local government services. It hears business tax appeals, acts as the appellate body for franchise and personal income tax appeals, and serves a significant role in the assessment and administration of property taxes. For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit www.taxes.ca.gov.

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